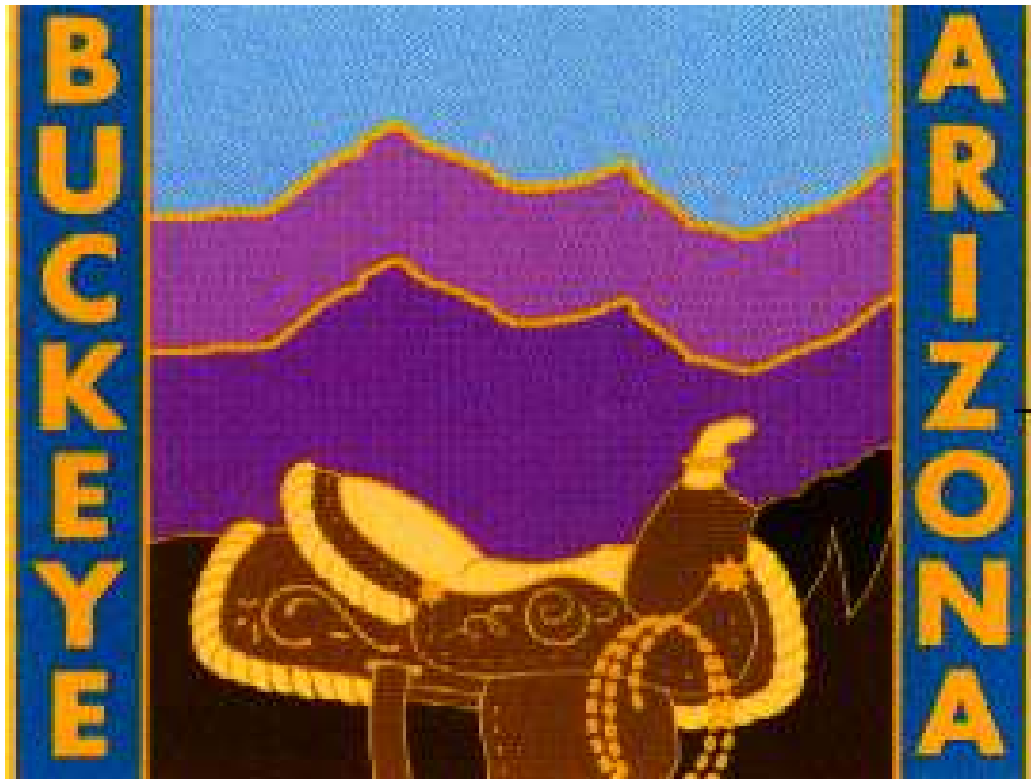


# **TOWN OF BUCKEYE GENERAL PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT WORKING PAPER #1: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

*“Written procedures to provide effective, early,  
and continuous public participation  
in the development of the  
Buckeye General Plan and Development Code  
from all geographic, ethnic and economic  
areas of the Town of Buckeye.”*



**February 2006**

*"The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview and capacity of any one particular person."*

*-Unknown-*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Ensuring that a broad base of public involvement opportunities occurs on all community development-related projects is very important to the Town of Buckeye. The Town takes a pro-active approach for soliciting public comments early and often in the preparation of community-based studies. The purpose of this public involvement plan is to outline the steps that the Town and the Partners for Strategic Action, Inc. (PSA) Team, the project consultants, will take to ensure public involvement in the development of the Town of Buckeye General Plan and Development Code. Additionally, PSA will document its compliance with this plan at all general plan meetings and comprehensively at the conclusion of the general planning process.

The purpose of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to meet the guidelines of "increased public involvement" required by state law. In development of general plans, the planning statutes require the following:

- ✓ *During the formation of a general plan maximum feasible public participation will be sought.*
- ✓ *Input from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the municipality will be solicited.*
- ✓ *Consultation and advice with public officials and agencies, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations, and citizens.*
- ✓ *Ensure maximum coordination of plans to secure and properly locate sites for all public purposes. These sites will be indicated on the general plan.*

Additionally, the state law requires the following:

*"The Governing Body shall adopt written procedures to provide effective, early and continuous public participation in the development and major amendment of general plans from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the municipality.*

*The procedures shall provide for:*

- a. The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives.*
- b. The opportunity for written comments.*
- c. Public hearings after effective notice.*
- d. Open discussions, communications programs, and information services.*
- e. Consideration of public comments.*

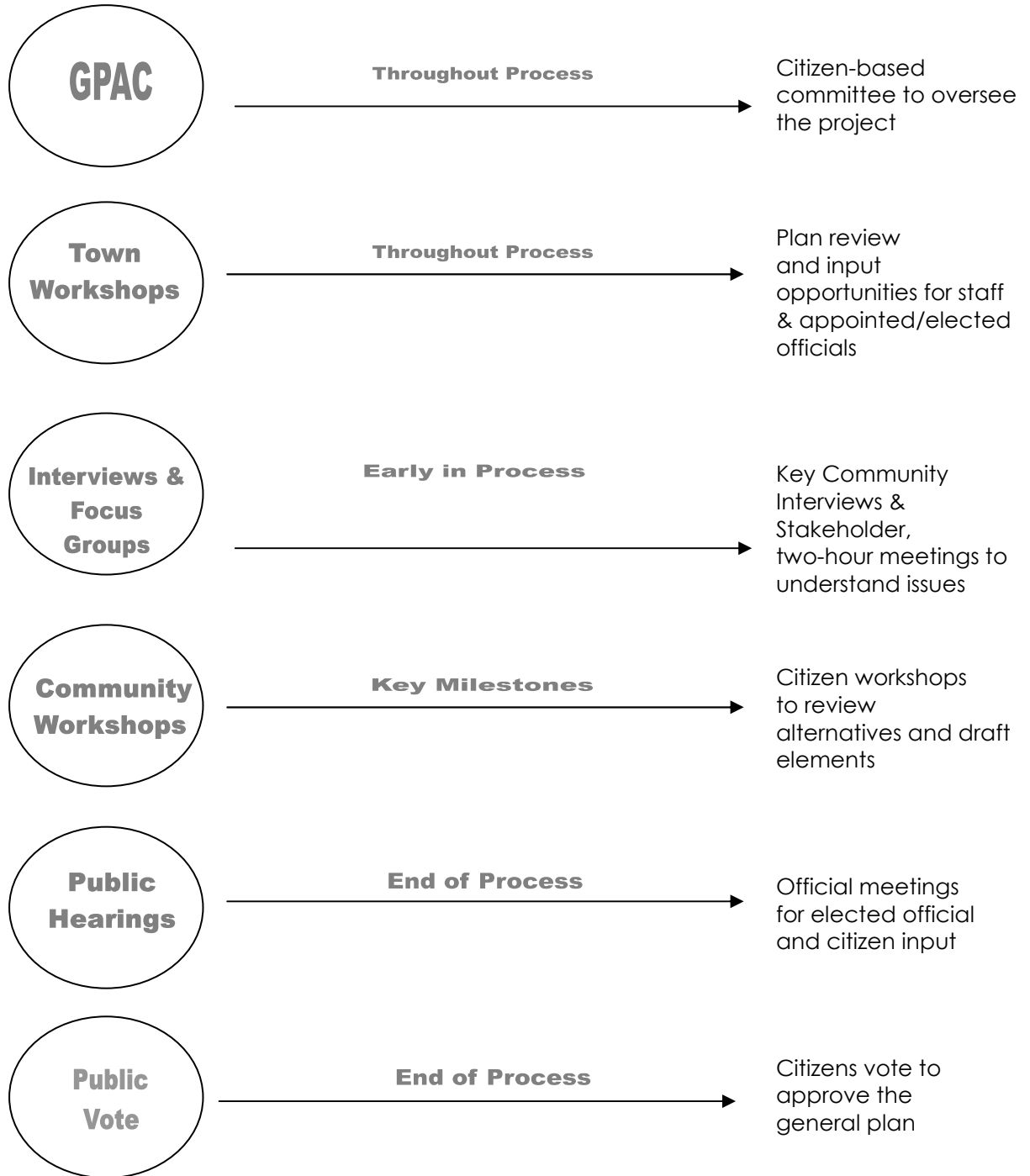
The following PIP is intended to meet and exceed the requirements of the state law. Its intent is to ensure broad public input into the development of the Town of Buckeye General Plan as well as the Development Code.

The PIP will be presented to the Buckeye Town Council for approval. Throughout the process, elected and appointed officials will be briefed about the PIP's status. At the conclusion of the process, the final general plan will be adopted after a series of public hearings. Lastly, the Buckeye General Plan will be submitted to the voters to ratify the Town Council's approval of the plan.

## ***PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN***

The following list summarizes the key elements to the public involvement process and is depicted on Table 1-1, Public Involvement Program.

**Table 1-1, Public Participation Program**



## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Project Scope:**

The Town of Buckeye General Plan is an update of the September 18, 2001 adopted Buckeye General Development Plan. Due to the tremendous local and regional growth occurring within and around Buckeye, the Town Council contracted with PSA to develop the Buckeye General Plan and update the Development Code.

The Town of Buckeye General Plan is a statement of policy and an expression of the community's vision for the future. When completed, the plan will be a tool to help guide and shape the physical and socio-economic development of the planning area. The mission of the General Plan is to achieve a sustainable future for the community. The General Plan will include:

- ✓ Community's statement of vision;
- ✓ 20-year plan for managing anticipated growth and development;
- ✓ Development goals and policies; and
- ✓ An implementation plan to realize the vision.

The Buckeye Development Code is the regulatory document that provides direction on how development or redevelopment will occur within the town. The Development Code will be written to implement the revised General Plan.

The projects will be run simultaneously and be closely integrated.

**Project Boundaries:**

The planning area for the Town of Buckeye General Plan process is approximately 650 square miles and includes several unique natural features. However, the general plan process will address regional issues and impacts due to the

tremendous amount of growth that is occurring outside the corporate limits of Buckeye.

Regional Context

The Town of Buckeye is located in western Maricopa County, approximately 35 miles west of downtown Phoenix. The Town has experienced tremendous development pressure and will continue to do so as growth continues to move west across the Maricopa County region.

The Town of Buckeye's population is estimated at 35,000 people. Buckeye is experiencing a population growth rate of over 20% per year over the past five years. The Town has historically been a farming community and is among the largest producers of Pima cotton.

The Town was incorporated as a general law town in 1929 and is governed by a Council-Manager form of government with six members and the Mayor comprising the Council.

### **3. GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GPAC)**

PSA will work very closely with existing Buckeye Committees (e.g., Development Board), staff, community leaders, and the public throughout the process. The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) will be overseeing the planning process. The GPAC includes the Development Board and Town Council as well as additional members of the public. It is critical to have day-to-day communication and input with these team members at the inception and throughout the planning process as the general plan is developed.

The GPAC plays a key role in providing direction and guidance to PSA during the process. Additionally, the GPAC will assist PSA in ensuring that all interested parties are informed of and have the ability to participate in the process. The Development Board, with input by the entire GPAC, will ultimately make policy and plan recommendations as they relate to the Buckeye General Plan.

PSA will meet at least 12 times with the GPAC during the process. GPAC meetings will be held on a regular basis at key milestones during the project. PSA will work with staff to schedule meetings and distribute agendas. PSA will attend the meetings, participate in the committee work, prepare handout

materials, and complete meeting summaries. Additionally, joint meetings between the GPAC, Development Board, and Town Council will be held at key points in the process.

#### **4. STAKEHOLDERS**

At the project initiation phase, all project stakeholders and interested individuals or agencies will be identified. The PSA Team has assumed that everyone would want to be involved. Therefore, it is the goal of this Public Involvement Plan to be inclusive rather than exclusive. This will be particularly important due to the regional implications of the planning effort.

Key agencies as well as general stakeholders will be invited to participate in the process. As other concerned public agencies and stakeholders are identified during the planning process, they will be added to the database and contacted. PSA will be responsible for maintaining a stakeholder computer database.

The following stakeholders will be contacted and kept informed:

- Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
- Maricopa County
- Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG)
- Arizona State Land Department
- Arizona Department of Commerce
- Bureau of Land Management
- Local Utilities
- Schools
- Neighborhood Associations
- Home Owners Association and other interested citizens groups
- Other agencies as appropriate

## **5. MINORITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS**

Ensuring that all minority and special needs populations have input into the development of the Town of Buckeye General Plan and Development Code is critical. The process goal is to ensure that every resident has an opportunity to provide input into the planning process. Therefore, bi-lingual information on the General Plan process will be made available and interpreters will be present at public meetings upon request. Particular efforts, through special workshops and one-on-one meetings will be made to reach out to minority populations.

## **6. COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANNING PROCESSES**

The Buckeye General Plan and Development Code process will coordinate closely with other planning studies. The following studies will run concurrently and the PSA Team will coordinate with these processes.

- ✓ MAG Interstate 10 – Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study
- ✓ ADOT transportation planning
- ✓ Arizona State Land Department Conceptual Planning

PSA will depend upon the GPAC, Town Staff, and appoint/elected officials to keep the consultant up-to-date on the status of any new local projects that warrant coordination.

## **7. AGENCY COORDINATION**

Agency coordination and communication is critical to the successful completion of the Buckeye General Plan. PSA will coordinate with state, regional, and local agencies throughout the study. Early in the study, a general introduction will be prepared and submitted to the previously identified agencies to alert them of the project. Personal follow-up telephone calls or meetings will also be made. By coordinating with the various agencies, PSA will be able to:

- ✓ Obtain background information and project data;
- ✓ Identify potential stakeholders and their perspectives;
- ✓ Develop an understanding of agency goals with respect to the study, and;
- ✓ Receive feedback on the project approach, process, and products.



## **8. PARTNERING WORKSHOP**

At the beginning of the process, PSA will organize and facilitate a partnering workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to reach agreement on a project mission statement, project goals and objectives, as well as key milestones. Additionally, a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities as well as definition of the decision-making process will be accomplished. The results of the partnering workshop will serve as the operating procedures for the General Plan and Development Code.

## **9. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

The following techniques will be employed, either individually or cumulatively, to notify the public of the General Plan and Development Code process and upcoming meetings. The goal of the public notification program is to inform about and ensure that people are aware of the opportunities to participate in the process. A variety of techniques will be used to solicit input into the process.

The mass media (i.e., print and electronic, when available) will be used to carry public notices, news releases, public service announcements, news items, and interviews. Also, existing newsletters (e.g., Homeowner's Association Newsletters and possibly church bulletins) will be utilized to get the word out to residents.

PSA will work closely with the Town of Buckeye staff to ensure that citizens, stakeholders, and officials are kept informed. Public notification techniques that will be used at various times during the project include:

- Invitational and/or information letters
- News releases to the media
- Newspaper inserts
- TV Cable Access, when appropriate
- Public display notices
- Public service announcements
- Provide Web Page information and announcements
- Direct mail to the following in order to obtain input or provide project information:

- ✓ Local elected and appointed officials
- ✓ Individuals who request to be placed on the mailing list
- ✓ Public and private groups, neighborhood associations, organizations, agencies, or businesses that request to be added to the mailing list

PSA will be responsible for press releases submitted to newspapers encouraging news articles to be written about the project and announcing public meetings. Press releases will be sent a minimum of two weeks prior to public meetings. However, the Town of Buckeye is responsible for any mailings of meeting invitations or information distribution. The Town of Buckeye will cover costs associated with public service announcements. PSA will not incur costs without approval from the Town Project Manager.

## **10. KEY COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS**

To understand issues, development trends, and opinions about the future, a series of key community interviews will be conducted. These interviews provide background information for the PSA Team as the projects are initiated. An interview guide will be developed and a list of potential interviewees will be identified with assistance by Staff. The PSA Team will conduct the interviews and develop a summary report. The interviews will be confidential and common themes/divergent viewpoints will be identified.

## **11. FOCUS GROUPS**

The Focus Group interview is a qualitative research technique used to solicit feelings and opinions about issues and possibilities. A guided discussion is the heart of the focus group. Four focus groups will be held early in the process to uncover issues and concerns related to growth and development. PSA will facilitate the two-hour discussions and then analyze the results. The results, conclusions and recommendations will be summarized and presented to the GPAC.

Meeting Sites:	20-person capacity facility within the project area will be utilized.
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Letter of Invitation:	Letters will be written and transmitted to selected participants.
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Audience:	Four focus groups will be held with different stakeholder groups (e.g., business).
Meeting Preparation:	A strategy session with the staff will be held to achieve consensus on the focus group interview guidelines and handout materials to be distributed.
Meeting Record:	A Summary Report of each of the focus groups will be prepared by PSA and discussed with the GPAC.
Product:	Report summarizing issues/concerns by stakeholder group. The report will also identify common themes and conflicts between stakeholder groups.

## **12. COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Community-wide events provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the projects' progress and provide input to the process. It provides an opportunity for the public to speak informally with PSA, GPAC members, and Town staff and officials about issues, concerns, or aspects of the future development of Buckeye. The PSA Team, working with staff, will organize and facilitate these events, develop display boards, materials, and graphics that will illustrate key elements of the study. Participants will be encouraged to provide input and comments via one-on-one discussions and/or a questionnaire that corresponds to the displays.

Several community events are planned during the Buckeye General Plan and Development Code process. The first community event actually involves a week of public events to determine the community's vision. The week long events include a Youth Visioning Institute, Town Staff Visioning Workshop, Community Vision Workshop, and a Downtown Revitalization Workshop. These events culminate in a Community Workshop at the end of the week where the results of the community vision will be presented.

The second Community Workshop will be held mid-way in the process to review the issues, land use classifications, and discuss the range of land use/ transportation alternatives. Additionally, the public will have an opportunity to provide input to the Development Code.

The third Community Workshop will be held toward the end of the process to present and receive comments on the Draft General Plan Elements.

Meeting Sites:	100-person capacity facility within the project area will be utilized.
Public Advertisement:	News releases will be submitted to selected media in accordance with the PIP.
Letter of Invitation:	Letters will be written and transmitted to local officials and individuals in the database who have shown an interest or attended previous meetings.
Meeting Preparation:	A strategy session with the GPAC will be held to reach consensus on the format, agendas, exhibits, and handout materials for the Community Events. Subsequently, an agenda, display graphics, and handout materials will be prepared.
Meeting Record:	A Community Event Summary Report will be prepared by the PSA Team and meeting results discussed with the GPAC.
Product:	#1 – Development of community vision #2 - Input by general public on alternatives #2 – Comments on Draft General Plan Elements

### **13. JOINT GPAC/DEVELOPMENT BOARD/TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS**

At key milestones in the process, joint meetings between the GPAC, Development Board, and/or Town Council will be held. It is critical to ensure that the Town Council stays up to speed on the process and products being produced. It also provides an opportunity for “checks and balances” to ensure that elected officials are on-board with recommendations. Summary meeting notes of these joint meetings will be compiled.

## **14. DEVELOPMENT CODE REVIEW**

Based on review of all previous recommendations and the final Development Code Diagnosis/Outline, the PSA Team will prepare the Draft Development Code for review. The review process will be divided into three manageable sections consisting of related chapters of the Development Code such as:

Meeting #1: Administration (procedures and decision-making responsibilities, enforcement);

Meeting #2: Districts, uses, and nonconformities; and

Meeting #3: Development standards both general and district-specific (such as parking, landscaping, environmentally sensitive lands, hillside regulations, design standards, definitions).

These meetings will be posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and the public is encouraged to attend and submit comments.

Each draft module will be sent to Staff for review and revision prior to sending it to the Development Board (and GPAC if necessary). Each draft module will be accompanied by a cover memorandum that summarizes major new features in the drafts, significant changes for current provisions, and explanations of the new materials.

## **15. TOWN NEWSLETTER**

The Town of Buckeye currently produces a Town Newsletter on a regular basis. The goal is to utilize the Town Newsletter as an avenue to promote activities and communicate with citizens about the General Plan and Development Code process. Regular articles about the General Plan and Development Code will be developed by PSA for inclusion in the Town Newsletter. It is envisioned to serve as an update on the process and a notice of upcoming activities, such as announcing community events. PSA, working with staff, will create that part of the newsletter devoted to the General Plan and Development Code process.

## **16. PROJECT NEWSLETTER**

The PSA Team will create a Project Newsletter that is devoted to the General Plan and Development Code. Three Project Newsletters will be distributed at strategic points in the process. The purpose of the Project Newsletters is to educate the residents about the project and process, present key planning concepts being considered by the GPAC, and promote upcoming public events. PSA will be responsible for creating the Project Newsletter and Town of Buckeye will distribute it to all residents. The three newsletters will include the following:

### **Newsletter #1**

- What is a General Plan? (process & schedule)
- What is the Development Code? (process & schedule)
- Promotion of the upcoming week-long event

### **Newsletter #2**

- Land Use/Transportation Alternatives
- Alternatives Implications
- Community Workshop Promotion

### **Newsletter #3**

- Draft Plan Elements Overview
- Preferred Alternative
- Community Workshop Promotion

## **17. COMMUNITY DISPLAY**

The PSA Team will create a Community Display (tri-fold table-top display) that can easily be rotated around the community or be set up at community events. The purpose of the Community Display is to raise awareness about the process and to stimulate community dialogue about the projects. Materials on the Community Display will evolve throughout the process as new information becomes available. A comment card will be developed and distributed at the Community Display encouraging community comment. The PSA Team will be responsible for the initial development of the Community Display and any updates. Town of Buckeye Staff will be responsible for deploying the Community Display at various sites throughout the community.

## **18. TOWN OF BUCKEYE WEB SITE**

PSA will explore developing a link (or page) to the Town of Buckeye Web site that will allow individuals to gather information about the General Plan and Development Code process. The Buckeye General Plan and Development Code information will be interactive, allowing citizens to ask questions and provide comments, in addition to receiving upcoming meeting dates, status of the project, and general information.

## **19. PROJECT WORKING PAPERS**

PSA will produce several "Working Papers" after critical phases of the process. The Working Papers will be reviewed by Staff and presented to the GPAC. These technical reports serve two purposes. First, they ensure that an agreement is reached at critical points during the process and second, they document the process and the decisions being made. The Working Papers will be made available to the general public at Town Hall and other public gathering locations. Additionally, the Working Papers will be distributed to local elected officials.

1. Public Involvement Plan
2. Data Base and Inventory
3. Setting the Vision
4. Goals and Objectives
5. Land Use/Transportation Alternative Scenarios
6. Preferred Alternative

## **20. PUBLIC COMMENT FOLLOW-UP**

As necessary, responses to questions and comments not addressed at public meetings will be made in writing. Public notices will be provided by mail to interested parties identifying where the final General Plan and Development Code documents will be available for public review.

Every effort will be made to keep the public informed during and at the conclusion of the project to ensure that all interested parties are apprised of the projects' status.

## **21. PUBLIC HEARINGS/MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS**

Throughout the process, regular update presentations will be made at the Town Council meetings. Prior to the adoption of the plan, at least 60 days prior to the action, a review draft of the plan will be submitted for information purposes to the following agencies as required by state law.

1. The planning agency of the county in which the municipality is located.
2. Each county or municipality which is contiguous to the corporate limits of the municipality or its area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.
3. The regional planning agency within which the municipality is located.
4. The department of commerce or any other state agency subsequently designated as the general planning agency for the state.
5. Any person or entity that requests in writing to receive a review copy of the proposal.

## **22. EVALUATION SYSTEM**

To ensure that the process is inclusive and achieving the PIP's goals, the following evaluation system will be followed.

1. A PIP status report will be made at all GPAC meetings. The presentation will solicit comments and provide direction regarding the implementation of the plan. These reports will be made available to the public upon request.
2. A monthly update on the implementation effort of the PIP will be made to the Development Board and Town Council by staff.
3. A report will be completed by the Development Board and presented to the Town Council analyzing the results of the public participation process at the end of the Buckeye General Plan process.



## **23. ADOPTION PROCESS**

### **General Plan Adoption**

According to Arizona Revised Statutes, at least two public hearings are required to adopt the General Plan. The Town of Buckeye plans to conduct three public hearings before plan's adoption. Two public hearings will be held with the Development Board. The Board will review the general plan and comments received during the 60-day review process. After considerable review, the Development Board will make a recommendation for adoption of the Buckeye General Plan. A public hearing with the Town Council will be held before the General Plan is adopted. During the review, either the Board or Town Council can make changes to the General Plan before adopting.

### **Development Code Adoption**

Two public hearings will be held to adopt the Development Code. One public hearing will be held with the Development Board and the second public hearing will be held with the Town Council. The Town Council will adopt the Development Code. All public hearings will be posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and the public is encouraged to provide comments.

## **24. GENERAL PLAN RATIFICATION VOTE**

According to the Growing Smarter legislation, the Buckeye General Plan will be referred to the voters for ratification of the Town Council's adoption of the General Plan. Prior to the vote, PSA will create public copies of the plan and summaries of the document and staff will make them available to the citizens of Buckeye. The Town staff will also develop a public information/communication campaign so the citizens of Buckeye can understand the implications of the Buckeye General Plan. The voters of Buckeye must ratify the community's General Plan at least once every ten years according to the current state law.

## **25. GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The Buckeye General Plan is intended to be a guide to decision-making. The Development Board, Town Council, and staff will utilize the document in making any decisions regarding the development of the community. To adequately serve as a policy guide, the staff and elected/appointed officials should annually review the document to ensure that it remains current. Any review process should encourage public input in accordance with this PIP. Over time, the Town may consider amendments to the General Plan maps and/or policies in the plan by landowners. The General Plan provides direction and guidance on how these potential amendments should be reviewed and considered.